



Sociology 1306.901: U.S. Social Problems
Fall 2012

Instructor: Rachael Schmid
Class time: MWF 1:10-2:00 PM
Room #:
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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Textbook(s) Required:

Macionis, John J. 2010. Social Problems (4th edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Shieler, David K. The Working Poor: Invisible in America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005 (Paperback edition).

Course Objective:

Course Description:

This course describes social problems facing the United States today and identifies how these problems affect and is affected by our institutions and culture. We will learn about social inequality, deviance, social institutions and global issues. We will learn how to interpret social problems within the context of social theory. Finally, the course will look at potential solutions to such problems from a sociological perspective.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify and describe various theoretical perspectives on social problems.
 2. Students will document, analyze, and debate ongoing social problems processes and issues using a sociological framework.
 3. Students will investigate and analyze one current social problem in-depth.
 4. Students shall be able to demonstrate heightened sensitivity to political and cultural issues.
- The overall objective of the course is to give you the information and critical skills necessary to make intelligent choices about political and policy debates concerning social problems. This is NOT a course stating right and wrong, but an intellectual journey to:
 1. Understand how a social problem is constructed.
 2. Understand different theoretical perspectives used to explain particular social problems.
 3. Look at current research and mass media information on particular social problems.
 4. Learn to recognize, synthesize, and apply various theoretical perspectives to your own experience.
 5. Recognize the importance of theory and research in social policy formation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

This course is designed to allow students to become active agents in learning. There are a series of assessments to assist you in achieving the course objectives. Each week you will work on various combinations of assignments, activities, discussions, readings, ect. **Review course outline for due dates.**

Attendance: Routine attendance is highly encouraged. As a college student, you will be responsible for all materials covered in lectures, discussions, and assigned readings.

Participation: If you are not in class, it is difficult to participate. There are different types of learning styles: hands-on learning, visual, auditory, ect. We will attempt to utilize as many as possible.

Requirements & Grading

The course activities will include three examinations, a group project, reactions, and discussions that will stretch your sociological imagination. (See descriptions below.) Students have the possibility of receiving a total of 790 points for the course. The point distribution will be as follows:

Exams 3	300
Quizzes 9	90
Threaded	
Discussions 10	100
Participation	100
Sociological Project	200
Total	790

The grade distribution is as follows:

A (790-729) B (728-671) C(670-613) D(612-555) F(Below 554)

Examinations: Three exams will be given throughout the course of the semester. All exams will be on line. The format will be, short answer, multiple choice, and true/false questions. The tests are cumulative. This means the information from one section WILL carry over into the following section. ALL students are expected to take the exam on the scheduled test date. Makeup exams will not be given unless a genuine emergency or crisis occurred, and you will be excused from the exam on the test day ONLY if prior notification has been given. Makeup exams may be given in an alternate form (i.e. essay exams).

Quizzes: There are nine quizzes this semester. These are taken online. Quizzes are five questions. Consider quizzes like an aid to your understanding of the class material and practice for the exams. There are no makeup quizzes. Quizzes are available for twenty-four hours. Yes, you can take the quiz out of class. You can take the quiz once.

Threaded Discussions: Writing is a great learning tool. Writing allows the individual to digest thoughts, experiences, passions, expectations, and a host of other factors. Each week, you will be responsible for writing in the threaded discussion “blog” about the assigned topic. You are to write one entry and reply

to two entries. You should have a minimum of three entries. This threaded discussion is due each Saturday (as assigned by syllabus) by 12:00 A.M. The entries do not need a citation and do not need to be lengthy. One page or less is best and preferred.

Attendance/Participation: is expected at all course meetings. It is proven that students learn better and have a tendency to do better in courses if they come to class regularly. A significant portion of your grade comes from discussion, group work, and activities completed in class. Therefore if you do not attend, passing will be difficult.

**Sociological Project-Photo Paper & Presentation: Connecting Social Problems:
I will assign groups**

1. Collect Photos of a Social Problem

Collect 5 photographs that illustrate sociological concepts of one social problem we will study this semester. The pictures should primarily be on one topic although some aspects may fall into several categories based on the interrelated aspect of social problems. The pictures should fit together well. You can choose to stage the pictures on your own, take pictures of people and social interaction in their/its naturally occurring state, or use pictures from books and/or websites.

2. Interpret Your Observations

For each picture, you need to write several paragraphs (1/2 to 1 page) explaining and analyzing what you think is occurring. Draw on course readings and lecture material for concepts and terms to analyze this "snapshot" of your social surroundings. You **MUST** tie every picture to a concept or idea discussed in class or your textbook to get credit for each picture. Be sure to answer the following questions in some way for each picture: What story does the picture tell? What issues or concepts discussed in class does this photograph illustrate? What makes this a social problem? How do the pictures portray the social problem? Feel free to go beyond just these questions. These are merely a starting point.

3. Organize and Present Your Findings

Every project should include an introduction (1/2 to 1 page) indicating the theme of the project, an interpretation of each photo (1/2 to 1 page each) and a conclusion which will tie the photos together and discuss how the pictures portray the social problem (1 page). The project should read like a book and flow well from one picture to the next. Use transition sentences to get from one picture discussion to the next. The pictures and your discussion of them should flow in a logical order. Place each photo at the top of a new page, and begin your narrative below. Each entry should be about 1 page including the picture on the first page. All aspects of the paper should be typed. Each group will have five-eight minutes to present in class on the assigned week.

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS
ONE AUG 27-AUG. 31	THE MAKING OF A SOCIAL PROBLEMS THEORITICAL PARADIGM	M: SYLLABUS W: "The Promise"/ "Collective Definition of a Social Problem" F : MACIONIS CHAPTER 1 QUIZ One
TWO SEPT 5-SEPT. 7	POVERTY	M: No Class W: NICKEL AND DIMED F: IN CLASS EXERCISE QUIZ
THREE SEPT 10-SEPT 14	POVERTY	M: Macionis Chapter Two W: THE PROBLEM WITH POVERTY, THE PROBLEM OF WORK F: QUIZ/IN Class Work Day
FOUR SEPT17- SEPT. 21	RACISM	M :WHITE PRIVILEGE W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 3 F :QUIZ/weblinks
FIVE SEPT 24-SEPT 28	CRIME AND VIOLENCE	M: SAINTS AND THE ROUGHNECKS W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 6 F: EXAM ONE
SIX OCT 3-OCT 5	ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS	M: No Class W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 8 F: QUIZ/class Debate
SEVEN OCT 8-OCT 12	MENTAL HEALTH	M: BEING SANE IN INSANE PLACES W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 9 F: QUIZ/weblinks
EIGHT OCT 15-OCT 19	GENDER AND SEXUALITY	M: "Gender as Structure" Class Exercise (How would Your Life Be) W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 4 F: QUIZ/ Tough Guise video clip
NINE OCT 22-OCT 26	THE CHANGING FAMILY	M: DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF AMERICAN MARRIAGE W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 12 F: QUIZ
TEN OCT 31-NOV 2	WORKING AND CAREER	M: No Class W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 11 F: EXAM TWO
ELEVEN NOV 5-NOV 8	EDUCATION	M: STILL SEPARATE, STILL UNEQUAL W: MACIONIS CHAPTER 13

		F: QUIZ
TWELVE NOV 12-NOV 16	POPULATION	M: MACIONIS CHAPTER 15 W:ON The Move F: In Class Work Day
THIRTEEN VACATION		
FOURTEEN NOV 26-NOV 30 PRESENTATIONS		
FIFTEEN DEC 3-DEC 7 PRESENTATIONS		